



United States Department of the Interior  
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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LINCOLN PLAZA  
145 EAST 1300 SOUTH, SUITE 404  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84115

In Reply Refer To

FWS/R6  
ES/UT

November 13, 2001

SUBJECT: Letter to the Signatory Parties of the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Conservation Agreements regarding 12-month finding for Bonneville Cutthroat Trout

Dear Colleague,

Enclosed is a copy of the Status Review for Bonneville Cutthroat Trout and the 12-Month Finding for the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout (BCT) published on October 9, 2001. The finding concludes that listing of the BCT as a threatened or endangered species under the Endangered Species Act is not warranted at this time. The US Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) based this finding on the status of the species at this time, including the level of threats that exist and the conservation actions being implemented. Although the finding is not based on the existence of Conservation Agreements, the Agreements have provided a forum for more effective identification and minimization of threats, implementation of conservation actions and improved communication and cooperation between the participating agencies and groups in general. We commend the State of Utah for their state conservation agreement and for taking the lead for development of the range-wide conservation agreement.

In the status review document, we provided recommendations at the end of each geographic unit (GU) section pertinent to each GU that we believe will continue to conserve BCT into future years. We ask that the signatory parties review these recommendations and direct efforts towards these actions where deemed appropriate and necessary for the long-term conservation of the species.

The recommendations are as follows for each GU.

**Bear Lake GU (ID and UT)**

- 1) Management actions on Bear Lake should continue to protect native BCT stock and supplement it with brood stock and artificial rearing to compensate for angling pressure.
- 2) Increased implementation and enforcement of grazing regulations to prevent acute impacts from grazing in streams and along riparian areas. Although regulations have been developed, some are not adequately enforced to protect BCT in certain drainages. Habitat restoration should focus on restoration of minimum flows in tributaries to ensure available flow during spawning periods and adequate flow for natural recruitment of

young BCT. Tributaries should be examined for opportunities to improve habitat condition so that resident BCT can be established or enhanced where possible.

3) **Nonnative** species should be eliminated where possible to promote BCT but can be balanced through angling harvest and put-and-take fishing in streams that receive high angling pressure.

4) Land management agencies (USFS and BLM) should regulate activity in upper watersheds to maintain good riparian conditions in upper portions of the streams, including implementation of land-use activities that are conducive to good water quality and healthy stream conditions.

#### **Bear River GU (ID, WY, UT)**

1) Increased implementation and enforcement of grazing regulations to prevent acute impacts **from** grazing in streams and along riparian areas. Although regulations have been developed, information provided in association with this status review suggest some of these regulations are not adequately enforced to protect BCT in certain streams.

2) Consider using BCT for stocking rather than [rainbow trout] RBT or other nonnative **salmonids** into appropriate stream reaches. By stocking BCT, [Utah Division of Wildlife Resources] UDWR, [Wyoming Game and Fish] WGF and [Idaho Fish and Game] IDFG can promote the sportfish and native species value of BCT while further reducing known threats. This action would be most appropriate where nonnative **salmonid stocking** continues in waters that are connected to areas occupied by pure BCT populations.

3) Conduct further population, habitat and genetic surveys in both unstudied areas or known BCT drainages requiring further study (ie. Logan Canyon) so that a more comprehensive assessment of BCT among these drainages exists.

4) Managers in this unit have expressed that further research on habitat and resource conflicts and on effects of hybridization between BCT and RBT would be very **useful**. This information may be **useful** to BCT conservation throughout BCT range.

#### **Northern Bonneville GU (WY, UT)**

1) Continue to conduct surveys so that a comprehensive assessment of BCT among these drainages can be done and priority drainages, within which conservation actions should be focused, can be identified.

2) Stock BCT rather than RBT or [brook trout] BKT into appropriate stream reaches. By **stocking** BCT, UDWR can promote the sportfish and native species value of BCT while further reducing known threats. This action would be most appropriate where nonnative **salmonid stocking** continues in waters that are connected to areas occupied by pure BCT populations.

3) Continue cooperation with private and Federal land-owners in identifying and correcting habitat problems along streams that contain pure BCT (i.e. Chalk Creek).

4) Make conservation of pure BCT populations a priority in the planning, permitting and construction of future water development projects in the NGU.

#### **Western Bonneville GU (NV, UT)**

1) Development, implement, and enforce grazing regulations to prevent acute impacts from grazing in streams and along riparian areas. Although regulations have been developed, some are not adequately enforced to protect BCT in certain drainages.

2) Focus on identification of remnant populations, range expansion within the native BCT range and restoring connectivity among small, fragmented streams where potential exists.

3) Secure long-term protection of habitat and instream flows where possible to protect BCT populations.

4) Make BCT in-basin reintroductions a priority over BCT out-of-basin transplants.

#### **Southern Bonneville GU (UT)**

1) Secure long-term protection of habitat and instream flows where possible to protect BCT populations.

2) Continue focusing on identification of remnant populations, range expansion within the native BCT range and restoring connectivity among small, fragmented streams where potential exists.

3) Development, implementation and enforcement of grazing regulations to prevent acute impacts from grazing in streams and along riparian areas. Although regulations have been developed, some are not adequately enforced to protect BCT in certain drainages.

4) Develop and improve communication with the public. Make efforts to further educate and inform the community about BCT and other native species issues to bolster the local support that is necessary for successful management programs and actions.

These recommendations, although developed specifically for each GU, should be considered for the range of BCT. The recommendations focus on three main issues, which are being addressed in **part** but that need added attention in future programming: 1) grazing, 2) stocking nonnative salmonids and 3) water development. With respect to grazing, it became clear through our analysis that land management agencies and other agencies with authority should continue to focus on, and change where necessary, grazing practices for the purpose of restoring and protecting long-term ecosystem health that will not only benefit BCT but will protect interests of public uses into the future.

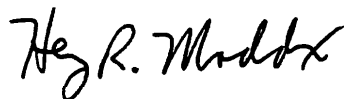
Also, State wildlife agencies should continue to pursue use of BCT in state hatchery systems or **from** brood sources for purposes of sportfishing where appropriate rather than stocking non-native **salmonids**. This opportunity is greatest in streams that will connect or extend existing BCT populations to allow large, complex metapopulations to develop. In following what most State agencies have already implemented, we recommend **stocking** of nonnative salmonids be eliminated completely **from** waters containing BCT populations protected as 'conservation populations'.

With respect to water development, State and Federal agencies should emphasize protection of BCT in watersheds planned for extensive water development. Protection should focus on the long-term persistence of BCT and reducing future conflicts between BCT and water development. This recommendation is particularly applicable in the Northern Bonneville GU (i.e. Wasatch Mountain watersheds such as Snyderville Basin in Park City and Emigration Canyon) where water development and planning is extensive to meet the growing human demands.

Lastly, we strongly encourage continued development and finalization of Conservation Agreements with the US Fish and Wildlife Service in the states of Idaho, Nevada and Wyoming. This will allow agencies and groups to continue to direct programming effort and funds to BCT conservation **and** secure the future of these programs.

In closing, we thank the participants of the Bonneville Cutthroat Trout Conservation Agreement programs for their assistance in collecting, providing and compiling information for our use in completing the status review and 12-month finding and for their continued commitment to BCT conservation. If you have any questions about the status review, finding or other BCT issues, please feel **free** to call Yvette Converse or myself at (801) 524-5001 extension 135 or 124 respectively.

Sincerely,



Henry R. Maddux  
Utah Field Supervisor

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